

REMARKS

A total of 33 claims remain in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed April 4, 2008, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, claim 35 has been amended to more particularly define features of the present invention. More specifically, claim 35 has been amended to define that “the first team member is a member of two or more teams, and wherein the Virtual Team Environment (VTE) client application enables the first team member to interact with the persistent collaboration services suite to select a respective different one of the plurality of member profiles as the current profile for each of the teams”. Claim 36 has been cancelled to avoid redundancy in view of amended claim 35.

In preparing the above-noted amendments, careful attention was paid to ensure that no new subject matter has been introduced.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- claim 35 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as lacking clarity; and
- claims 2-8, 10-15, 19, and 23-40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,546,005 (Berkley).

These rejections are believed to be traversed by way of the above-noted claim amendments, and further in view of the following discussion.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 35 has been amended to in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, amended claim 35, is now believed to conform with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Favourable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is therefore believed to be proper, and such action is requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

As noted above, claim 35 has been amended to define that “the first team member is a member of two or more teams, and wherein the Virtual Team Environment (VTE) client application enables the first team member to interact with the persistent collaboration services suite to select a respective different one of the plurality of member profiles as the current profile for each of the teams.” Thus, for example, the team member can be a member of three teams, and can indicate that he is “in the office”; but at the same time indicate a preference to communicate with one team via e-mail ONLY, a second team via telephone ONLY, and the third team via instant messaging ONLY. Furthermore, the team member can easily define and select these preferences, by selecting an appropriate one of his profiles as the “current profile” for each team. None of the known prior art teaches or fairly suggests these features, nor the advantages obtained thereby.

U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid) teaches a presence awareness system, in which a user may provide communications information (such as telephone number, e-mail address etc.) and indicate a willingness (e.g. “door status”) to engage in communications. At col. 5, lines 12-50, Godefroid teaches the use of “exceptions rules” to enable a user to grant specific permissions to specific persons or groups. Thus, for example, a user may grant permission to a person or persons to contact him, even if his door status is “closed” (thus indicating a desire to be un-interrupted). Thus, according to Godefroid, the user is provided with flexible control over their availability by defining a standard or default rule (access is limited by the door status), and then defining specific exceptions to that default rule for specific persons or groups.

However, according to Godefroid, the use of exception rules is used to grant permission to contact the user (eg over-ride a “closed” door status) and/or obtain information about the user (eg to obtain their real name, given their pseudonym). Godefroid does not teach or suggest that exception rules can be defined to indicate different communications preferences of the user, for communicating with respective different persons or groups. Thus, for example, there does not appear to be any way for a user to define exceptions rules that would permit one group to contact him via e-mail ONLY, a second group to contact him via telephone ONLY, and a third group to contact him via instant messaging ONLY.

U.S. Patent No. 6,546,005 (Berkley) does not provide the missing teaching. Berkley provides an Active User Registry which is capable of brokering between a user's preferences for being contacted or communicated with by others and, on the other hand, a subscriber's requested preference for making contact or otherwise communicating with the user. The user's preferences and communications information (e.g. telephone numbers, e-mail addresses etc.) are stored in the Active User Registry, along with identifying information such as the user's name and one or more aliases. The Active User Registry is also capable of learning which ones of the user's telephone numbers, e-mail addresses etc. via which the user is currently available for receiving communications.

However, Berkley does not appear to teach or fairly suggest any means by which the user may indicate respective different preferences for receiving communications from members of different groups. Thus, for example, there does not appear to be any way for a user to define preferences for one person or group to contact him via e-mail ONLY, a second person or group to contact him via telephone ONLY, and a third person or group to contact him via instant messaging ONLY.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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